

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Deaf and the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired met for their monthly meeting on , 2019.

Present: Susan Pack, Chairperson; Roy DePriest, Vice-Chairperson; Dr. John McAllister, Secretary; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; Faith McLaughlin, Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Dr. Priya Gupta, ASB Parent Representative; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; Beth Smith and Jaime Harrell, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest Residents

Ms. Pack called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. The next meeting was scheduled for November 19th at Arkansas School for the Blind.

19-J-015 Motion to Approve Minutes

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September meeting. Ms. McLaughlin made a motion to approve the September, 2019 minutes and Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items

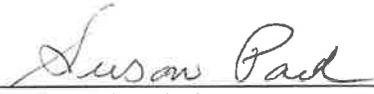
None

Discussion Items

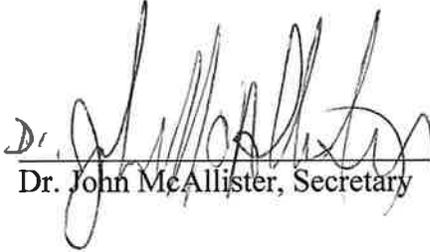
None

Ms. Pack said she received a letter from the Arkansas School Board Association stating a representative from each school board needs to attend a meeting being held at the ASBA Conference in December. The meeting is December 11th. She asked if anyone was planning on going to the 3-day meeting and said 12 hours of credit could be obtained during the conference. Mr. DePriest asked what the dates were and Ms. Pack said December 11-13th. Ms. Pack said if anyone was going to attend to let her know. She said she needed to remind the members they needed to get their required hours turned in – 9 hours for the first year and 6 hours thereafter. She said that it is part of each school's state report. Mr. DePriest and Ms. McLaughlin stated they wanted to attend the December meeting.

There being no further business of Joint, the meeting moved to the Arkansas School for the Blind agenda.



Susan Pack, Chair



Dr. John McAllister, Secretary

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired met for their monthly meeting on October 15, 2019.

Present: Susan Pack, Chairperson; Roy DePriest, Vice Chairperson; Dr. John McAllister, Secretary; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; Faith McLaughlin, Board Member; Dr. Priya Gupta, ASB Parent Representative; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; James Caton, ASB Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Beth Smith and Jaime Harrell, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community; Hillcrest Residents

19-B-020 Motion to Approve Consent Items

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the consent items to include the minutes, financial statement and personnel items. Ms. McLaughlin made a motion to approve the minutes, financial statement and personnel items. Mr. DePriest seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

Ms. Pack asked Mr. Caton if he had any comments on the personnel items. Mr. Caton said he hated to see Vivian retire but it was necessary for her. He said the promotion for Trista Irving is where she moved to another department (from Child Nutrition to the IRC). Mindy Bess completed her Teacher of the Visually Impaired certification. He said a GT teacher had been hired and she has a lot of experience. Ms. McLaughlin asked if she was local and Mr. Caton said yes and that her daughter used to work for ASB a few years ago until her husband was relocated. He said a nurse had been hired for the 12-8 shift so we are fully staffed now. Tymberly Garrett worked for ASB before and is familiar with the school and the students.

Action Items

Approval of Meal Ticket Pricing Increase

Mr. Caton said ASB has been below the recommended charge for adult meals and this is to get approval for the recommended increase.

19-B-021 Motion to Approve the Meal Ticket Increase

Mr. DePriest made a motion to approve the increase in meal tickets from \$3.50 to \$3.75 and Ms. McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items Report to the Public

Mr. Caton said he gave the Report to the Public on October 4th in the auditorium. He said the report was laid out with an introduction of the move and transition under the Department of Education. He said last year he did a history of the school but this year he included the Strategic Plan at the beginning of the report. He said it lays out the goals as well as some of the measurable objectives and strategies that are being used in each of those areas. Pictures of the kids and activities have been included to give an overview of the programs that have been in place and new programs like Cane Quest. The pen making program continues with the kids making and selling the pens. The report then follows the strategic plan goals and breaks it down to different areas that relate back to the goals and strategies such as the Distance Learning, EAST, and RISE which is really huge in education right now. It has a lot of requirements that have to be worked through and progress is being made towards those requirements. It puts a whole new emphasis on reading, science of reading and teaching students how to read. He said they need to make sure they have the discussions and conversations needed with the Department of Education so they realize the challenges that are presented for students when it comes to teaching the Science of Reading to visually impaired and blind children. There are some different things involved along that line and advocate for our kids. Mr. Caton said on Assessment he gave an explanation on the ACT Aspire and ESSA Index scores. He said in one way that system will be stacked against them in a lot of ways and present a lot of challenges for them, they are not afraid to try to navigate it but at the same time want to advocate for the needs of the kids. He said academics are very important to ASB and they will continue to work on it but know that there is also the whole expanded core curriculum that is a big reason ASBVI is here. This is where a lot of activities can be offered in a lot areas that they might not get in the public school setting and is just as important as the academic part. He said it is a lot to balance and navigate. He said his staff and teachers work really hard to meet the needs of the students. He said counseling and mental health is going well. He is looking at adding an additional resource this year for behavioral health needs for students. He said ASB continues with counseling and have a licensed social worker on staff. He said Special Education related services have the different programs listed that are offered at the school – Home Life, Child Nutrition, Infirmary. He said it was interesting when these reports are put together – you get this overall comprehensive look at everything and see that there are a lot of different parts to the school. He said the school still has kids from public schools come to the Low Vision Clinic. The Birth to 3 Program continues to grow with just two ladies traveling and serving the kids across the state. He said they do a lot when you consider there are only two of them and the amount of traveling they do.

Mr. Caton said the Instructional Resource Center is where the braille and large print text book program that is done for ASB students as well as public school students, along with the Wrightsville Correctional Facility braille project is slowly rebuilding. At this time there are two certified transcriber inmates that are in the program and more in the processing of earning their certification.

Mr. Caton introduced Rebekah Lewis, English teacher, and said she was going to talk about Friends of ASBVI and what they are doing. Ms. Lewis said this was her second year at ASB. She said when she came to ASB there were so many things that she wanted to reach out to the community to get them involved. She said some of her family and friends joined with her to redecorate the dorms to be more homelike atmosphere. She said they have started a closet to help dress the students. She reached out to local artists and received donations of several beautiful paintings. One artist, Bob Snider, paints the watercolors and oils at Oaklawn. He had open heart surgery three weeks ago yet invited us to his home in Roland. She took two students with her to his home. He was going to let them pick out a painting. He had a painting project for them giving them an art lesson. She said they painted a beautiful pot of flowers and then he went inside and brought them a \$3,000 painting of the same flowers. He donated the painting to the school. Ms. Lewis said one of ASB's new third grade student's mother is donating new beds/headboards for the dorms. She said it is so much fun and a joy to be a part of. She thanked the board for letting her share. It is always great to involve the community. Mr. Caton said he couldn't be more thrilled and pleased with the direction that the Parent/Teacher Organization has taken. As he said before the PTO has been reorganized to get more emphasis toward community involvement/engagement which is in line with the initiatives that ADE and the state wants to see schools do. He said it is really paying off for the school and he appreciate Rebekah and her hard work. She has made a lot of the contacts and networking that has to happen for it to work. He said he knows the kids are enjoying it all. He said Rebekah was also involved in the Discover Arkansas segment on Channel 11 where the school was featured. He said he appreciated Teresa Doan being available for it since he would have normally done it. She represented the school well.

Superintendent Report

Mr. Caton said the ASB track team, for the third year in a row, came back with the first place trophy from the School for the Blind Track Conference. He said he was very proud of the team. ASB had students attend the FBLA Fall Conference. Some of the 8th graders went on a career development field trip to a company in Benton that test chemicals and water. He said ASB has started a partnership with Superior Success which is job training and placement. Some students have already been placed.

Mr. Caton said the EAST students have started a new project with Dorcas House delivering children's books to them. They also continue to go to public school for "Walk a Day in My Shoes" where they teach and educate sighted peers on blindness and visual impairment.

Mr. Caton said the Bollywood concert was very successful. He said the donations that were received came to about \$5,000. There were close to 200 people in attendance. He thanked the Chakraborty family for sponsoring the event.

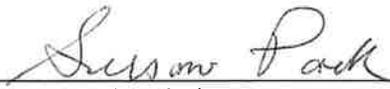
Mr. Caton said the White Cane celebration was today and there were representatives from World Services for the Blind, Division of Services for the Blind, American Council for the Blind, and the Arkansas Chapter of the Federation for the Blind. The Governor's Proclamation for White Cane Day was read. He said it was the Lions' Clubs that got it started in the 1930's when they noticed people were using black canes (which weren't very visible). Dr. McAllister talked about O&M and its importance.

Parents Invited to Lunch was today and parents were asked to complete the High Reliability School Survey. The survey will give good feedback on how the school and its services are being perceived. He said he had one parent tell him they really appreciated these opportunities to engage with their kids at school.

Mr. Caton said the Child Nutrition Review would begin tomorrow. Tomorrow is also Fair Day and the weather looks to be good. On Thursday the Great American Shake Out drill (Earthquake drill) will be completed. The Flu Clinic will be held on the 21st. School picture day is the 22nd. Red Ribbon Week is October 23 – 25th. This year the counselor is going to focus on education of the vaping epidemic. He said public schools are being hit hard. He said he attended the Attorney General's summit recently on vaping. It is a huge issue and he hopes to get ahead of it with ASB's students by educating them. Mr. Caton will be speaking at the Cabot Lions Club on the 24th. Halloween is the 31st. Cane Quest will be November 7th. The Fall Parade will be November 8th at 10:00. The Chili Cook-Off will follow that afternoon at 4:30. There a lot of good prizes for the winning recipe.

Ms. Pack thanked Rebekah for coming to speak to the board about the projects she has been working on with the students and Friends of ASB.

There being no further business for the Arkansas School for the Blind, the agenda moved to the Arkansas School for the Deaf.



Susan Pack, Chair



Dr. John McAllister

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

The Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Deaf met for their monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 15, 2019.

Present: Susan Pack, Chairperson; Roy DePriest, Vice Chairperson; Dr. John McAllister, Secretary; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; Faith McLaughlin, Board Member; Dr. Priya Gupta, ASB Parent Representative; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Beth Smith and Jaime Harrell, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest Residents

19-D-021 Motion to Approve Consent Items

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the consent items to include the minutes, financial statement and personnel items. Dr. Atcherson made a motion to accept the consent items and Mr. DePriest seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Pack asked Dr. Dickinson if there was anything she wanted to say regarding the personnel items. Dr. Dickinson stated they have lost three staff members due to resignations. They have a new Technology Director, Faysal Ahmed. He has been there 2 or 3 weeks and has hit the ground running. Dr. Dickinson also mentioned they have a new teacher, Anita Bell, and a new Speech Language Pathologist, Derenda Alexander.

Action Items

None

Discussion Items

Report to the Public

Dr. Dickinson said they included a lot of information from their accreditation into the Report to the Public. School history, leadership, purpose, motto, and vision statement were also included as it originated from many discussions and tweaking until they felt it was perfect for the school. She said she loves what they believe about deaf children. ASD's organizational values are also included to show how adult members on campus work together. On page 15 of the report are some notable achievements. She said for the sake of bragging on the staff and what a wonderful job they do, she wanted to read some of the things that have happened in the last three years.

She began by stating how the school evaluates everything they do in terms of education related to teaching and learning to make sure they are using the best evidence based practice today and keeping up with what is going on and what research is showing.

- Dr. Dickinson highlighted hiring a Grant Writer, Kevin Lentz, who has been fantastic and very aggressive. Many things on campus have happened because of his work. Dr. Dickinson noted they have received several big grants, one major grant for the renovation of Parnell Hall.
- She has also reestablished the ASD Foundation.
- The school has started the EEC (Early Childhood Center) as well as the ADCC (Arkansas Deaf Career Center) 18-21 program. They started the ASD Culinary Arts program which is better known as the Double Pride Café.
- They started accepting students on 504 plans. Sometimes they are hard of hearing or have a different kind of hearing loss that do not require them to have an IEP, but still need some other special considerations and/or accommodations in the classroom. These students are accepted when the IEP team determines that ASD would be the best placement.
- ASD has also partnered with a private company, Thompson Driving, to offer Driver's Education to their eligible students.
- They have a partnership with Vocational Rehab to bill up to \$100,000 annually to provide pre-employment training for ASD students.
- ASD set up the Arkansas Deaf Heritage Center which has helped bring Deaf Culture and history of the state to our students.
- They have established a new Mission, Vision, Motto statements, Bilingual Beliefs, Organizational Values, and also adopted PBIS ROAR. PBIS was established for all grade levels.
- ASD has hosted two conferences – 1) Deaf Education and Career Readiness conference; 2) ASL Roundtable conference. ASD attended the GPSD Triathlon Academic Bowl and will be hosting it this year.
- She said she wants to be sure the school finishes their digital learning one on one laptop program. They started with High School using MacBooks and moved to Middle School with Chrome Books this year. This year the push has been to continue with Lower School, third through fifth graders who will soon have Chrome Books distributed.
- The school has also increased progress monitoring and looking at provided data gathered by the teachers. Students are now able to track their own progress with their individual folders which gives the students ownership of their successes.

Dr. Dickinson said those are some of the things that were also identified throughout the accreditation process. She said Mr. Caton mentioned assessments and how they do not always reflect student achievement. Dr. Dickinson read the last paragraph of her Report to the Public to share.

“Achievement is vitally important to the faculty and staff of ASD, and while there is continued effort to improve state-mandated assessment results, outcome data must be scrutinized in light of their applicability to our student population. The data obtained does not adequately represent the achievement or abilities of our students and shows less performance growth because it compares Deaf or Hard of Hearing students to their English speaking hearing peers. The assessments required are not validated or normed on students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Additionally, these English-based state assessments prove to be a

challenge to not only ASD students but to Deaf or Hard of Hearing students across the nation.”

She stated that it is important that the assessments are reviewed and analyzed to look at the outcomes and glean as much information as possible from them, but they also must recognize there are challenges.

Mr. DePriest asked what PBIS was. Dr. Dickinson deferred the question to Becky Bell, the school psychologist, to answer. Ms. Bell stated it stands for Positive Behavior Intervention and Support. The students can earn points for positive behavior and focusing on certain areas – Respect, Organization, Achievement and Responsibility (ROAR). The students can turn their points in for different rewards.

Mr. DePriest asked what the date was for ASD’s Report to the Public. Dr. Dickinson replied it will be October 26th which is Homecoming weekend.

Superintendent Report

Dr. Dickinson said they have been very involved in the RISE training. Superintendents are also required to do a specific amount of training for RISE; however, it is more challenging for ASD as most of the RISE training is relying on phonics.

Dr. Dickinson said they have also been working on a grant for a 37 year old dishwasher. Seth also has two interns from UAMS. Seth and his employees are getting ready to start the cinnamon roll season.

Ty Mathis was asked by Dr. Dickinson to give an update on the Parnell Hall renovations. Mr. Mathis said they are trying to finish up the elevator project. He expects to see it about 95 – 98 percent completed within the next two weeks. It is an incredible addition to the campus. They conducted the pre-bid meeting for another grant of \$450,000 to renovate the auditorium. The opening the bid next Tuesday at 2:00. Parnell Hall would receive a new stage, carpet, drapes, floors, projector, and lighting. He said it was something that was really needed and will add a lot to their campus. Thank you to ANCRC for their generous support in renovating Parnell Hall.

Dr. Dickinson asked Ray Boland to sharing information about Sonshine 2.0 from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf who came to the school two weeks ago for a performance. He said Sonshine traveled for several years and then it was discontinued. They reestablished it and called it Sonshine 2.0. It consists of artists, dancers and singers in the program. They came Friday, September 28th and performed in Parnell. There were about 75 people from the community that also attended. Students from each school had their own time Monday and Tuesday with the performers to ask questions and learn about performing and how to express themselves through dance. Mr. Boland emphasized that the ongoing relationship with NTID and their outreach program has been beneficial in helping students. They taught ACT Prep to the high school students showing them how to prepare for the ACT. He also mentioned ASD has a new IXL program for K-8th grade.

It assesses what the students know, their strengths, and their gaps so that will support the teachers getting them through 8th grade. The teachers have already started using the program and the kids love it because they get rewards when they complete mastering a skill.

Dr. Dickinson asked KaAnn Varner to speak next. KaAnn said they are really trying to make their Fridays mean more. She said they have a Lower School Assembly every Friday morning. Two weeks ago they had a fire truck come and the kids really liked that. The main reason they had the firetruck come is they have been having issues with the little ones thinking the fire alarm is a toy. The firemen showed them the truck and then told them about the fire alarm. She said they also had the Red Cross come and start a pillowcase project. That is where they teach safety to the children. They take the pillowcase home and fill it with things they would need in case of an emergency.

Dr. Dickinson mentioned they have started a reward system for to improve staff attendance. She said they tried to think of something positive they could do. They decided on a Be Here Be on Time initiative. If staff members come to work every day for an entire month without missing a day, then they qualify for the Blue Level; if they are there every day AND on time for an entire month then they qualify for a special Gold Level. Blue Level winners have a choice of: leaving one hour early on Fridays (with supervisor approval); get a free Sonic drink; lunch with an administrator; king size candy bar or extra 15 minute break. Gold Level winners get a one hour lunch; king size candy bar; free DPC lunch; 5 passes to wear blue jeans; extra 30 minute break; lunch with an administrator or a free ticket to an event. She said the first month they had 7 people qualify for the Blue Level and 5 for the Gold Level. She thinks it will grow next month.

Dr. Dickinson then asked Michelle Alvarez to talk about the upcoming Silent Sunday. Michelle stated they still have tickets for sale and still have reserved tables available. Tickets in advance are \$30 and for children 6-12 they are \$10; at the door tickets will be \$35. She also mentioned they are always looking for great silent auction items. Great restaurants and entertainment will be there.

Dr. Dickinson said the GPSD Triathlon will be hosted by ASD this year. They have other Deaf Schools from the region come to compete and it is academically rigorous. The school word for the year is Inspire. They are always looking for new ways to *Inspire* staff and students.

Dr. Dickinson spoke about changing the name of the Tornado shelter, the number one meeting place on campus. As a school, they did some brainstorming during the Town Hall and collected names and she will let everyone know what happens.

Dr. Dickinson moved on to then speak about the sinkhole. The last time she mentioned that the road had a hole in it. It was unclear who was the first discovered the hole so she asked Ty Mathis if he was the first one to notice it. He responded that it was Gary that noticed the hole in the road. They thought there must be a pipe below it, so they hired a contractor. The contractor said there was no pipe under there and they started digging and found hole about the size of a coffin.

ASD had the Historical Preservation Society look at it and conduct initial testing. They came out several times. The final decision was that it was possible that it was a burial site. There was a metal box and the top had disintegrated. Ty commented that there is a cemetery next to the sinkhole. Dr. She said the tombstone show dates in that area show 1923 and 1925. They found an old Optic magazine that said one man was buried in the institute cemetery and he was the superintendent of the black school. She said when she talked to the staff about how to honor those who are buried on campus. She does not think they need to move them because they are part of the school family. She said it is awkward to have a cemetery in the middle of the school. She said Thursday will be the next meeting with the Historical Preservation Society. They will survey the land.

Ms. Pack said Mr. Crow, Mr. Drake and all the people she had the honor of knowing and that were here for years had always told her there was an epidemic that occurred in the winter and at that time the students stayed the whole year. She said they told her the parents could not afford to have them sent home on the train so that is why they buried them here. She said there were some adults in the group. She said that is one of the things where you wish you still had those people here to tell the stories. She said she was sure Earnest had heard some of the same stories.

Ernest said he lived in the dorms that were adjacent to the cemetery and he said there were a lot of stories about it. Mr. Caton said he remembers when he came in 1995 that it was the first thing he learned from the kids (he started out in the dormitories) was about the cemetery. He asked if they were going to continue to research it.

Mr. Caton said he had always tried to figure out the time period because the school didn't come here until 1939. Ms. Pack said at that time it was a self-sustaining farm. She said it was interesting and it was history that was right here on campus.

Dr. Dickinson said she would keep them in the loop on what is going on. She said tomorrow NAD (National Association of the Deaf) is hosting their board meeting at ASD. They are excited and honored to have them on campus.

Dr. Dickinson said she had Hot Wassail and cookies waiting at her house for anyone who wanted to stop by.

Ms. Pack said if there were no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:17 pm.



Susan Pack, Chair



Dr. John McAllister, Secretary